...BUT I DOUBT YOU CAN DO IT FOR SOMETHING YOU DON'T HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE WITH.

"GET INTO CHARACTER" IS SOMETHING YOU'LL HEAR A LOT...

YOU'RE NOT A PROFESSIONAL ACTRESS, AFTER ALL.

Tune In to the Midnight Heart

SO, IN ORDER TO PLAY THE ROLE OF SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN TWO-TIMED...

...YOU NEED TO EXPERIENCE BEING TWO-TIMED FIRST.

FWOOSH

WITH THAT SAID...

I'M SORRY! PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR TWO-TIMING YOU!

WE'RE NOT EVEN DATING!

YEAH.

HOWEVER, SHE STILL FOUND IT IN HER HEART TO FORGIVE HIM. IS THAT CORRECT?

DUE TO BEING AT ODDS WITH HIM, EVEN THOUGH THEY BOTH HAD FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER.

...WHO GOT CHEATED ON BY A MAN...

THE ROLE YOU'RE PLAYING IS A WOMAN...

CAN YOU ACTUALLY PULL IT OFF?

HMM...

SEE? YOU'LL END UP THINKING ABOUT IT.

SUPPOSE THAT A TWO-TIMER TRIED TO PROFESS HIS LOVE FOR YOU AGAIN...

WOULD YOU ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO SAY THAT YOU LOVE HIM, JUST LIKE IN THE SCRIPT?

THAT'S WHY EXPERIENCING IT IS THE BEST WAY TO GO ABOUT THIS.

THE SPONTANEOUS EMOTION YOU FEEL FROM THAT IS WHAT'LL MAKE YOUR PERFOR-MANCE MORE AUTHENTIC.

...I'LL ALSO HAVE TO EXPERIENCE BEING TWO-TIMED BY YOU?

WHO ARE YOU TWO-TIMING ME WITH?

SO, ON TOP OF PRETENDING TO BE YOUR GIRLFRIEND AGAIN...

B-BUT WHY?!

SWAY

!?

THAT WOULD BE ME.

NYOOP

WHAT?

...I'M IN LOVE WITH BUCKY.

IT'S CUZ...

THAT JUST DOESN'T SOUND REALISTIC AT ALL.

THERE'S NO POINT IN DOING THIS!

SO, WE'RE BOTH IN LOVE WITH EACH OTHER, AND YOU'RE CHEATING ON ME WITH IKO...

I'M JUST GOING WITH HER BECAUSE SHE'S THE LEAST BUSY MEMBER RIGHT NOW.

DON'T TAKE IT AT FACE VALUE. THIS IS ALL PART OF AN ACT.

UH...

SO, YOU'RE JUST GOING TO LET THAT OIZUMI GIRL...

GET AWAY WITH TRASH-TALKING YOU?

UGH...

SHE THOUGHT YOUR VOICE WAS ALL YOU HAD GOING FOR YOU.

SHE WAS BASICALLY SAYING, "OH, I GUESS ALL THOSE FACELESS VOICE ACTORS JUST AREN'T THAT GOOD AT ACTING!"

SHE WAS MOCK-ING YOU, WASN'T SHE?

ARGH ...!!

DON'T YOU WANT TO MAKE HER *PAY?*

DON'T YOU WANT TO GET BACK AT HER?

THAT'S IT! YOUR EMOTIONS ARE EX-PLODING!

I'LL MAKE HER EAT HER DAMN WORDS!

GOOD! THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

YEAH! I WANNA GET BACK AT HER!

SCREECH

I'LL MAKE HER KNEEL BEFORE ME AND LICK MY SHOES!

I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD GO THAT FAR.

OH, NOTHING.

?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

LET'S BEGIN OUR SPECIAL TRAINING RIGHT AWAY, THEN.

...THAT I'M SORRY... FOR ALWAYS BEING SUCH A PAIN TO DEAL WITH...

I JUST WANT TO SAY...

...

I DON'T MIND AT ALL.

A GIRL WHO'S A HANDFUL HAS HER OWN CHARM.

NOBODY ASKED...

WHAT THE HELL?

WOOSH

...GIVE ME ONE MORE CHANCE?! PLEASE!

HOWEVER, YOU'RE STILL MY ONE TRUE LOVE...

WILL YOU...

THERE YOU HAVE IT.

KIRI... IKO AND I HAVE BEEN GOING OUT IN SECRET.

I JUST CAN'T IMAGINE IKO GOING OUT WITH YOU...

SORRY.

IT'S JUST NOT REALISTIC TO ME AT ALL.

THE BATHROOM IS RIGHT OVER THERE.

OH, DAMN IT! I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT!

THIS IS FAKE AS HELL...

<TILL DEATH DO US PART.>

I LOVE YOU, DARLING.

I'M GOING TO FINISH OFF THE CLUB'S REMAINING TASKS WITH IKO.

SO LET'S JUST TAKE OUR TIME TO GET INTO OUR ROLES.

WELL, YOU'LL PROBABLY HAVE A HARD TIME SEEING US AS A COUPLE RIGHT AWAY...

...IKO AND HIM DATING...

I SIMPLY CAN'T PICTURE ...

UGH...

I JUST DON'T SEE HOW THIS WILL WORK OUT.

I WON-DER...

WELL, I GUESS IT'S NOT *TOTALLY* IMPOSSI-BLE...

SKUFF

STOLEN FROM YOU...

...TO HAVE SOMEONE YOU LOVE...

すた THUD

すた THUD

I'M ACTUALLY KIND OF CURIOUS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE...

HOW LONG ARE WE GONNA HAVE TO HIDE OUR RELATIONSHIP?

HEY, ARISU.

IT'LL BE A MAJOR HEADACHE IF ANYONE FINDS OUT THAT WE'RE DATING.

JUST BEAR WITH IT FOR NOW.

Y'KNOW, ARISU, I ACTUALLY WANNA HAVE YOU ALL TO MYSELF, BUT I GUESS THAT WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO ASK, HUH?

STILL, PUTTING ON AN ACT IS PRETTY FUN, ISN'T IT?

NO WAY...

NO WAY! NO FREAK-ING WAY !!!

ARE THOSE TWO... WHA ??!!!

HUH ...? WHA ...?

C'MON, SHINOBU AND RIKKA SAID IT'LL WORK JUST FINE.

WOULD THIS PRANK REALLY BE EFFECTIVE?

S.TOP!

DON'T LOOK OVER THERE! YOU'LL GIVE IT AWAY!

SHE'S LOOKING AT US. THE FACE SHE'S MAKING IS NOT OF THIS WORLD ...

I SEE.

YOU WANT NENE-CHAN TO EXPERIENCE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE TWO-TIMED.

ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS GET A GIRLFRIEND!

...IT'S GOING TO BE QUITE A SHOCK FOR HER.

IF SHE SEES YOU GET ALL LOVEY-DOVEY WITH ANOTHER GIRL IN SECRET...

YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO SIMPLE.

I'M TALKING ABOUT A *FAKE* ONE, OF COURSE.

IF SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY POSITIVE FEELINGS TOWARD ME?

WOULDN'T IT FALL APART...

Hold on a second..

THIS IS THE PLAN WE'RE GOING WITH?

?

HUH... ALL RIGHT, THEN.

I THINK SHE LIKES YOU WELL ENOUGH.

IF SHE'D REALLY HATED YOU, YOU'D HAVE BEEN KICKED OUT OF HERE LONG AGO.

That incident doesn't do me any favors, either...

SKUFF

Rock, paper...

LET'S DECIDE WITH ROCK PAPER SCISSORS.

SO, WHO'S GOING TO BE THE GIRL-FRIEND?

I DID EXPECT THAT SHE MIGHT BE TAKEN ABACK...

WHEN SHE FOUND OUT A GUY SHE'S CLOSE TO WAS DATING HER FRIEND...

...EVEN IF IT WASN'T EXACTLY TWO-TIMING. BUT STILL...

Hmm...?

THIS IS WAY BEYOND JUST "TAKEN ABACK"...

...

ISN'T NENE WAY MORE SHOCKED THAN WE THOUGHT SHE'D BE?

SHE'S TOTALLY FROZEN UP...

SINCE SHE'S NOT DOING ANY-THING, THEY PROBABLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO DO.

...

WELL, THEY EXPECTED NENE-CHAN TO BUTT IN AND INTERRUPT THEIR FLIRTING SESSION.

STIFF

STIFF

THOSE TWO ARE ALSO FROZEN STIFF, AREN'T THEY?

HIMEKAWA IS ALSO FROZEN UP.

NOW THIS IS A PROB-LEM.

THERE'S NOT REALLY ANYTHING FOR US TO DO.

WE SHOULD PROBABLY START OVER...

WHAT'S WRONG?

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

IT'S FAIRLY RECENT...

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

...HAVE YOU EVER KISSED SOMEONE BEFORE?

GLANCE

WHAT ABOUT YOU, NENE?

DO YOU HAVE FEELINGS FOR BUCKY?

HUH?

...BUT I GUESS I'LL BE UPFRONT ABOUT IT.

NENE WAS BEING REALLY VAGUE BACK THEN...

I WANT...

...TO KISS YOU.

I LOVE YOU LOTS...

...ARISU.

CHAPTER 21: AFFECTION IS AN ESCALATING PROCESS